Shortage of essential medicines

741. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether according to World Health Organisation there is an alarming shortage of essential medicines in the public sector;

(b) if so, whether the essential medicines are not available at a reasonable price to the needy;

(c) if so, whether Government propose to have a price control on essential drugs; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SRIKANT JENA): (a) As per the information available in this Department, there is no recent report from World Health Organisation regarding shortage of essential medicines in the public sector as specified in National List of Essential Medicines 2003.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The Drug Policy as amended from time to time envisages making available quality medicines at reasonable prices to the masses. Besides this Department has recently launched Generic Drug Campaign by opening Jan Aushadhi Generic Drug Stores with the cooperation of State Governments & Pharma CPSUs. The generic medicines available in these stores are cheaper as compared to the branded drugs available in the market.

A draft National Pharmaceuticals Policy, 2006 was prepared by this Department in. consultation with various stakeholders and submitted before the Cabinet for its approval. One of the recommendations made in the draft Policy is to bring essential medicines under price control subject to certain conditions and exceptions. The Cabinet considered the Policy in its meeting held on 11.1.2007. It was decided that the matter may, in the first instance, be considered by a Group of Ministers (GOM). The GOM had held four meetings but did not make recommendations to the Cabinet.

Commissioning of new project Namrup-IV

742. SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has finalized the plan for commissioning a new project as Namrup-IV under the Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizers Corporation Ltd.;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a declaration to this effect was made by the Hon'ble Minister, Chemical & Fertilizers at Namrup on 26th June, 2006;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the time by when it is likely to be commissioned;

(e) the total outlay and the target set for implementation of Namrup-IV during Eleventh Five Year Plan; and

(f) the other steps initiated by his Ministry for better health and survivability of the Namrup unit in this global competition era?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SRIKANT JENA): (a) to (f) The Hon. Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers during his visit to Namrup on 26th June, 2006, declared in a public meeting the intention of the Government to explore the feasibility of setting up of Namrup-IV unit with an annual production capacity of 8 - 9 lakh tones of urea. The revamp of Namrup Units *viz* Namrup - I, II & III has been completed on 22nd November, 2005. The Company has been making losses due to low energy efficiency, as the Namrup Units consume energy more than 12.7 Gcal per MT of urea as compared to other gas based units in the country which consume energy less than 6 Gcal per MT of urea. The Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Ltd (BVFCL) is exploring the possibility of further revamp of its Namrup units to achieve production level of 7 - 8 lakh MT per annum with an improved comparable energy efficiency or the alternative of setting up of Namrup-IV unit based on modern gas based technology. The Company has instituted a study through a process licensor to examine the current status of Namrup units and recommend the best possible alternative for the Company to sustain its future operations. No final decision has been taken in the matter as the report of the process licensor is yet to be finalized,

Simultaneously, the Government is also actively considering a proposal for financial restructuring of BVFCL so as to ensure sustainable operations of existing units, till an alternative as discussed above, is finalized.

Allocation of fertilizers to States

743. SHRI P. RAJEEVE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILISERS be pleased to state:

(a whether there was any shortage of fertilizers during monsoon seasons during last three years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any criteria has been formulated by the Ministry for distribution of fertilizers produced by CPSUs to the State;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the details of allocation to each State during the last three years?